



**STRATEGY
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CREATION OF A UNIFIED LOGISTICS COMMAND

BY

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UNCLASSIFIED

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Rembert M. Keith (LTC), USA

TITLE: Creation of a Unified Logistics Command

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 15 April 1996 PAGES: 34 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Combatant commanders require a seamless system consisting of organizations molded together at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels responsible for logistics support across the spectrum of operations for joint forces. This paper proposes the creation of a unified logistics command providing the strategic level point of contact for all logistics functions. A unified logistics command integrates and manages all national level resources while eliminating unnecessary duplication of functions at the strategic level providing the Department of Defense with a more effective and efficient solution to logistics support. A unified logistics command with its subordinate planning and coordination cell at each geographic combatant command and a joint logistics support command at the theater level affords the combatant commander with a single logistics manager for planning, coordinating, and executing responsive logistical sustainment.

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INTRODUCTION

Logistics sets the campaign's operational limits. The lead time needed to arrange support and resolve logistics concerns requires continuous integration of logistics considerations into the operational planning process. This is especially critical when available planning time is short. Constant coordination and cooperation between the combatant command and component staffs--and with other combatant commands--is a prerequisite for ensuring timely command awareness and oversight of deployment, readiness, and sustainment issues in the theater of war.

Joint Warfare of the Armed
Forces of the United States,
Joint Pub 1, 10 January 1995¹

Operations in the future will, for the most, be joint² and will be conducted in a strategic environment that is significantly different than that of the Cold War. The large armed forces of the Cold War, supported by huge defense budgets, often concealed the vast inefficiencies of the services.³ However, with large reductions in forces and with budgets near their lowest levels since before World War II,⁴ the military must centralize functions that offer economies and efficiencies into a single service or a joint capability while maintaining a viable fighting force.

The purpose of this paper is to propose a concept for reorganizing the logistical infrastructure at the national and theater levels through the creation of a unified logistics command. A unified logistics command at the strategic level

operates as a functional unified command with a subordinate planning and coordination cell at each geographic combatant command and a joint logistics support command at the theater level. Creation of a unified logistics command provides streamlined support to the combatant commander eliminating service stovepipe structures currently in place. This paper reviews logistical lessons from past joint operations, describes joint logistics doctrine, and proposes the mission, organization, and functions of this command for the command, control, and coordination of logistics for joint operations.

Additionally, the establishment of a joint logistics support command affords the geographic combatant commander a single logistical point of contact in the theater for executing the sustainment mission of the joint force. Reengineering the U.S. Army's emerging theater support command concept into a joint logistical support command (JLSC) provides a joint logistical command and control headquarters at the operational level. Interface between the unified logistics command and its subordinate JLSC will be described.

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 clarifies the responsibilities given to combatant commanders for the accomplishment of missions assigned to their commands.⁵ Figure 1, Unified Command Organization⁶, depicts the chain of command from the National Command Authority directly to the commanders of unified commands. Combatant command affords

combatant commanders full authority to organize and employ forces as necessary to accomplish assigned missions.

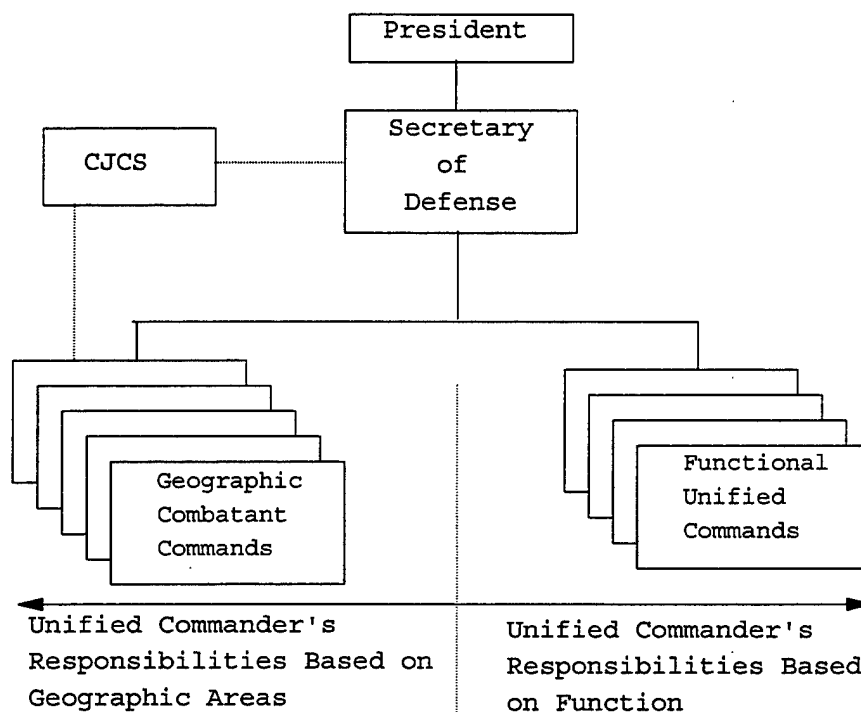


Figure 1 Unified Command Organization

Directive authority as exercised by combatant commanders allows them to direct service component commanders to use all logistical assets under their control within the theater in support of approved operational plans. During a contingency situation, directive authority gives the geographic combatant commander the authority to use all assigned resources for mission accomplishment.⁷ While he has the authority, the combatant

commander has no resources to establish an organization to conduct joint logistics operations.

"The combatant commander provides strategic guidance and priorities for operations, while service component commanders identify operational requirements to the national industrial logistic base."⁸ Because individual Services are responsible for providing logistical support to their assigned or attached forces of a joint command, duplication normally occurs. The Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act requires a combatant commander to make efficient use of all assigned resources including, when required, the elimination of redundancies or duplication of functions. The centralization of logistical planning and support functions will reduce or even eliminate these duplications.⁹

To deal with uncertain threats, the armed forces must be capable of conducting rapid, highly synchronized operations. Forces must be more tailorable, more versatile, more mobile, and more efficient.¹⁰ Future conflicts may not afford the luxury of months for a buildup prior to initiation of hostilities.¹¹ Additionally, as bases close overseas, the logistics structure required to support power projection forces must be improved.¹² "Power projection is inherently a joint undertaking. As such, force-projection logistics support requires a commensurate degree of 'jointness'."¹³

SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

At this moment the United States has highly capable field forces but a defense macrostructure that resists change and is overly departmentalized with each service maintaining independent support, depot, intelligence, and logistic centers.

Paul Bracken
"The Military After Next,"
1993¹⁴

Joint Pub 4-0 defines logistics as "the bridge connecting a nation's economy to a nation's warfighting forces."¹⁵ In reality, each of the U.S. Armed Forces builds their own 'bridge' to its deployed forces. Chapter 6, Title 10, United States Code and DOD Directive 5100-1, unless otherwise further directed, require each service to be responsible "to recruit, organize, train, and equip interoperable forces for assignment to combatant commands."¹⁶ Any degree of directive authority for logistics exercised by the combatant commander does not remove the services' responsibilities for providing sustainment to its forces. Geographic combatant commanders are dependent on service components for coordination among other services to ensure maximum interoperability.¹⁷ However, recent joint operations in the Persian Gulf War and Somalia continue to demonstrate a lack of sufficient planning and execution among the services resulting in "a redundancy of materiel, duplication of effort, and competition for scarce in-country assets."¹⁸

Redundancy of materiel and duplication of efforts are not new. Roger A. Beaumont relates one of many incidents during World War II from the Pacific theater that helped institutionalize this phenomenon.

Combined Operations staffs bent on rationalizing doctrinal development and planning found that "more than once... equipment...produced as a rush job at one Service establishment existed already at another, stacked in heaps."

Bernard Fergusson, The Watery Maze: The Story of Combined Operations, 1961¹⁹

Examples of the service components' stovepipe channels are shown in Figure 2. While each Service continues to operate its own stovepipe logistical programs from the supplier to the frontlines, the U.S. Army traditionally supplies the bulk of common use items or logistical support in a theater of operations.²⁰ These stovepipe programs work; however, they are ineffective in cross-leveling, costly, and provide limited visibility for the geographic combatant commander on the sustainment posture of the force. "The Nation...cannot afford multiple defense establishments."²¹

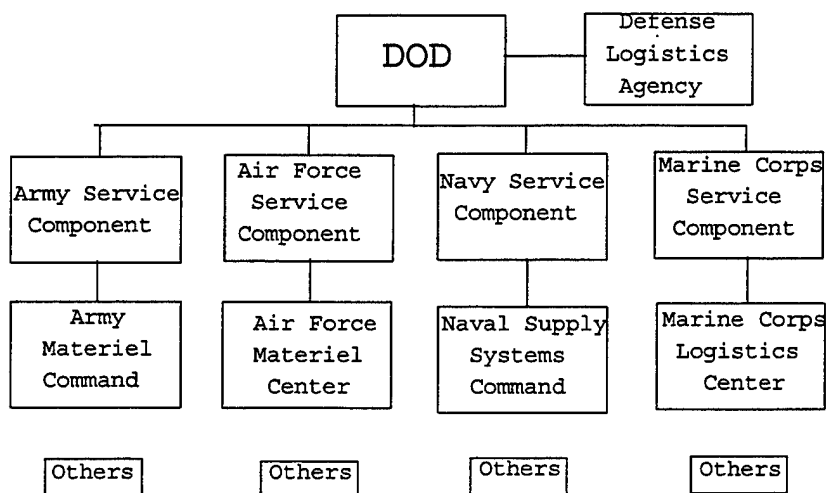


Figure 2 Service Component Stovepipe Organizations

Frequently, services compete for the same critical items for their sustainment needs. LTG William G. Pagonis, Commanding General, 22d Support Command (SUPCOM), said in Moving Mountains: Lessons in Leadership and Logistics from the Gulf War, that had a single point of contact not been established for logistics in the Gulf there would no doubt have been several different service logisticians simultaneously attempting to obtain or control critical limited resources.²² Designating an executive agent by the geographic combatant commander for common user support helps reduce the duplication of effort and provides limited centralized

control; however, "finding a balance between independence and jointness is bound to be a painful process."²³

Roles, mission, and functions of the armed services "represent compromises reached some forty-five years ago among competing military bureaucracies."²⁴ Changes in the threat, improved technologies, the nature of joint warfare conducted by combatant commanders, and reductions in the defense budget have produced significant challenges within DOD. Future defense budgets continue on a downward trend. Projections, from 1990 through 1999, indicate a 35 percent reduction in defense outlays.²⁵ While changes in the design of operational forces are ongoing, improvements in the logistics infrastructure must also be pursued. "We must search for innovative ways to provide for national defense and use our budget dollars wisely."²⁶

JOINT LOGISTICS DOCTRINE

With smaller forces, the U.S. must foster new concepts and procedures..., and weaknesses in joint operating procedures...must be corrected.

Joseph S. Nye, Jr., and
Roger K. Smith, After the Storm:
Lessons from the Gulf, 1992²⁷

Peacetime limits of budgetary constraints, operating policy, and specific guidance from the National Command Authority may

constrain a combatant commander's directive authority in employing joint logistics doctrine. These limitations will, most likely, not exist under wartime or contingency periods. Under a contingency situation, the combatant commander can direct use of all assigned assets or even direct reorganization of forces if the situation dictates.²⁸

Joint logistics planning is a command function that must be interrelated at the three levels of war - strategic, operational, and tactical. A geographic combatant commander exercising command over the three levels of war must also execute command over logistics. This requires that a single logistical command authority be established to ensure unity of effort.²⁹ Currently, there is no single joint logistics command in peacetime or wartime that supports the geographic combatant commander. Each service develops their own logistical support plans based on approved operation plans of the combatant commander. Services are directed by joint doctrine to coordinate their plans and mutual support agreements among each other in an effort to reduce or eliminate duplication and foster unity of effort.

Continuous coordination between geographic combatant commanders, assigned service component commanders, and other supporting combatant commands must be accomplished to ensure the establishment of adequate logistical support. Coordination and liaison work among players is expected with the oversight of the combatant command's logistical staff. Doctrinally, there is no single logistics command that oversees or coordinates the entire

process in peacetime or wartime. During a contingency, the geographic combatant commander may designate a single point of contact in the theater for accomplishment of this function. However, beyond the theater of operations, the geographic combatant commander normally does not have directive authority. Other than common user support, logistics remains the overall responsibility of each individual service component. This requires detailed, coordinated, and uninterrupted support planning and execution between all staffs and forces involved to ensure unity of effort.³⁰

During the early days of the Desert Shield deployment, the U.S. Central Command Commander, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, designated the U.S. Army as executive agent for most sustainment items for U.S. forces. General Schwarzkopf and LTG John Yeosock, the Army Service Component Commander, decided to designate (then) Major General (MG) Pagonis as Deputy Commanding General for Logistics for the theater. This designation placed MG Pagonis, the Third United States Army G-4, responsible for fuel, water, food, vehicular support, ammunition, and all classes of supply for the Army, the Marines, and the Air Force. The exception was that the Marines and the Air Force remained responsible for their own equipment repair parts³¹ This action greatly reduced the duplication of effort and provided for centralized control of specified items; however, it did not eliminate redundancies.

For various reasons, including lack of items and lack of CSS units, the Army could not meet its common item support obligations for some items by the specific time. As a result, the other Services relied on organic supply systems much longer than planned.

DOD Report to Congress,
Conduct of the Persian Gulf
War, April 1992³²

Operational decisions made on the early deployment of combat forces and the National Command Authority's hesitation to call up reserve forces for Desert Shield resulted in MG Pagonis creating an ad hoc support organization responsible for providing logistical support for forces in the theater. Eventually, this ad hoc organization was able to conduct effective centralized operations based on Army doctrine and experience.³³

Designating an executive agent for common item support during initial joint operations planning eliminates much of the confusion on support relationships. However, establishment of ad hoc organizations may be detrimental to the overall accomplishment of the campaign. Often, these organizations are not trained to function together and must create from scratch their operating procedures which can be extremely confusing for subordinate forces.

Ad hoc organizations tend to transition to a new organizational structure at just the time they need the stability that allows efficient and effective support in a crisis situation. This was the situation that U.S. Central Command found itself in on deployment in August 1990 for Desert Shield. Joint doctrine states that "whenever possible, peacetime chains of command and staffs should be organized during peacetime to avoid reorganization during war."³⁴

The case of the 377th Theater Army Area Command (TAACOM) summarizes some of the problems with failing to use organizations designed and trained in peacetime for its wartime mission. The 377th TAACOM, a reserve unit, was designated as the combat service support headquarters for the Third United States Army and the U.S. Central Command for operations in the Persian Gulf area. The 377th had participated and trained for operations under U.S. Central Command for eight years. Alerted on 23 August 1990 for deployment, the unit waited word on deployment until 27 September 1990 when it was removed from alert status and told it would not be deployed.³⁵ While the reasons behind the failure to deploy the 377th are beyond this study, it should be noted that the theater chain of command made the decision to establish an ad hoc, provisional unit headquarters rather than deploy a fully trained and organized unit that had planned logistical support, participated in exercises with Third United States Army and U.S. Central Command, and was familiar with the area of operations since its formation in 1982.³⁶

On the flight to Saudi Arabia, MG Pagonis visualized the requirement for a theater support command.

Concept of a TASCUM was validated by the efficiency and increasing successes which came out of the evolution of the 22d SUPCOM...one command will allow the centralized planning, management, and execution of theater support.

LTG William G. Pagonis,
After Action Report-Executive
Report, May 1991³⁷

Beginning as an ad hoc organization composed of extremely talented people who were hand picked for their expertise, the overwhelming challenge for MG Pagonis from the start was finding the staff to accomplish the functions. The early solution was to borrow military personnel from units as they arrived in country and the assignment of liaison personnel from arriving units.³⁸ Given the amount of time the allied forces had for the logistical buildup before combat operations began, this situation fortunately worked.³⁹

One must question how much time will be available for a buildup in future operations. Many of the logistics problems that emerged during the early months of Desert Shield continued to be solved on an ad hoc basis.⁴⁰ While there will always be difficulties during contingency operations, problems that can be

fixed before the next operation should be fixed rather than be left for ad hoc solutions.

JOINT LOGISTICS CONCEPT

...logisticians must reform and reshape logistics activities. The question is not IF to change, but rather HOW to change. Now is the time to examine our future and develop the infrastructure required to accept and accommodate these changes.

Shelton and Davenport, Air Force Journal of Logistics, 1993⁴¹

Strategic logistics assets provide the link between the nation's industrial base and the military force operations deployed in a theater. Tactical logistics is linked to strategic logistics through the support organizations that make up the operational level of logistics.⁴² What is needed is "... a truly seamless logistics system...molded together to form a system whose three levels are transparent to not only the CINC, but also to the ultimate consumers of logistic support."⁴³

Establishment of a unified logistics command provides a strategic level single logistics point of contact for all

services and for the geographic combatant commanders. A unified logistics command provides unity of effort at the Department of Defense level to integrate and manage national level resources ensuring sustainment of theater campaigns. Formation of this functional unified command and the redesign of the logistic structure at echelons above the army corps, numbered air force, numbered navy fleet, and the marine expeditionary force levels are required to provide a seamless logistics system.

The mission of a unified logistics command is to command the Department of Defense's national logistics resources. This is accomplished through managing, procuring, resourcing, and controlling the materiel management, maintenance, procurement, storage, distribution, general engineering, and health care functions for all the armed services. The unified logistics command exercises command and control over various independent service or DOD operations in existence today. These include but are not limited to the Army Materiel Command, Air Force Materiel Center, Defense Logistics Agency, Marine Corps Logistics Center, and Naval Supply Systems Command.⁴⁴ While each of these logistics operations may conduct a useful mission, there is potential for great savings by consolidating the functions of several of these organizations. Recent studies such as Direction for Defense: Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces continue to provide recommendations on consolidating several multi-service functions into single programs managed by a centralized activity.⁴⁵

The proposed unified logistics command organization is depicted at Figure 3. It consists of seven operating centers or subcommands - Materiel, Maintenance, Weapon Systems Management, Procurement/Contracting, Information Systems, Engineering, and Health Services.

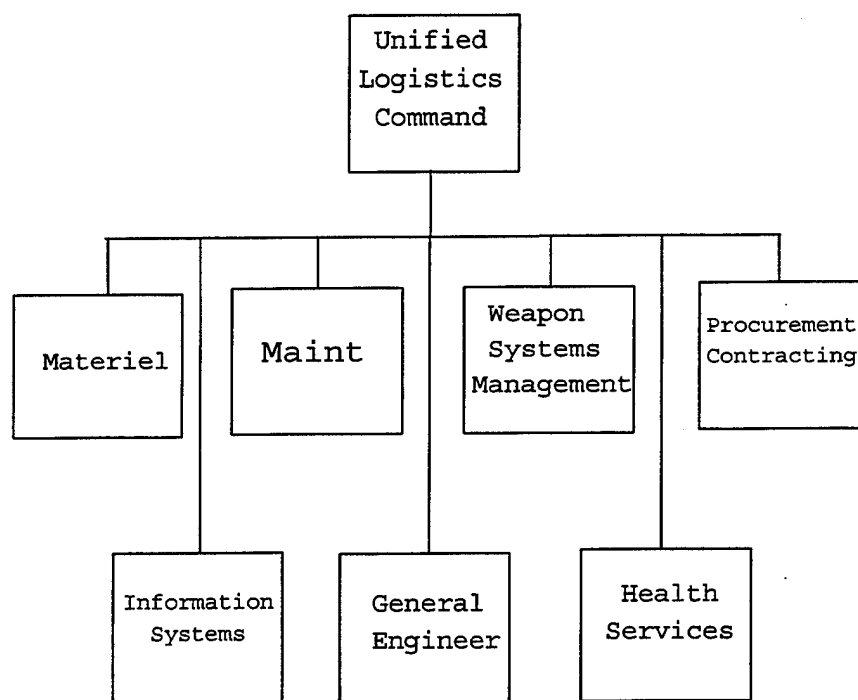


Figure 3 Proposed Unified Logistics Organization

Information technology improvements allow simultaneous access to data through integrated networks by the appropriate logistics

operating centers. Decisions must be made whether to select a particular service to become the DOD single capability or will there be consolidation among several services. Centralized workloading of the operating centers greatly increases efficiency and reduces overall DOD cost.

Creation of a unified logistics command enhances the efforts made to date within DOD. Consolidations and reorganizations have changed the logistics structure within each military service; however, much more can and must be done to further streamline central logistics support. Centralization has resulted in approximately 80 percent of all service materiel orders placed with the Defense Logistics Agency.⁴⁶ Additional consolidations allow the unified logistics command to leverage the total buying power of DOD thus increasing the economies of scale.

Consolidation of service component logistics operations along functional lines of joint materiel, maintenance, weapon systems management, procurement/contracting, information systems standardization, general engineering, and health services is required. The current Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) must be combined with remaining service components inventory control point activities forming the Materiel Center. Under this concept, the Materiel Center becomes the centralized authority responsible for purchasing, stocking, and delivering supplies producing a more efficient and cost effective operation. Inventory visibility is greatly enhanced with the implementation of a single supply system. Replacing the five different

logistics supply systems currently used within DOD⁴⁷ with a single system allows total visibility of assets from the strategic level to the tactical level and facilitates redistribution of excesses.⁴⁸

The Joint Maintenance Center is responsible for managing strategic level maintenance facilities. Greater increases in efficiency by cross-workloading facilities more evenly is an immediate result. One-of-a-kind maintenance facilities, i.e., depots, arsenals, etc., may remain operational, under the Joint Maintenance Center, for unique weapon systems requirements. However, the potential savings of consolidating the services' depot level maintenance activities appear to be great.

One of the most difficult areas to consolidate is weapon systems management. Advantages for consolidating the purchasing power of common repair parts and supplies are easily seen. The procurement of the more expensive repair parts of weapon systems are much more difficult to manage. Therefore, some of the service-unique weapon systems management functions that exist today may, in some form, exist in the proposed organization continuing to manage the larger systems throughout their life-cycle. It is possible that some consolidation can be accomplished among the services that use like items. One example is the C-130 cargo plane. Currently, there are four services (Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard) that use this aircraft and each operates a system management office. Why can't

there be a single joint level program office to manage this system for all users?⁴⁹

Consolidating procurement and contracting activities into a joint activity provides the potential for huge savings by "collocating similar program offices and consolidating those particular acquisition support activities where there is the widest duplication across service lines. The existence of separate service-unique acquisition organizations encourages service-unique programs at the expense of promising joint approaches."⁵⁰ Similiar consolidations of the services' combat health care system and general engineering assets will ensure true seamless joint logistics support to the geographic combatant commander.

Subordinate to the functional unified logistics command are the joint logistics planning and coordination cell (JLPCC) and the joint logistics support command (JLSC). The JLPCC, assigned to each geographic combatant commander's staff, provides direct support to the combatant commander. The JLPCC is the integrating organization in the combatant commander's headquarters that accomplishes the joint planning and coordination of theater campaign logistical plans between the service component commanders, the theater tactical logistical command and the national level logistics support system. This arrangement provides the geographic combatant commander with a direct link to the single logistics pipeline from the national level. The result is a joint logistics manager that the geographic combatant

commander can turn to for planning the logistical support for his joint force package. Additionally, the JLPCC deploys with the combatant command headquarters during contingencies providing continuous logistics coordination during this critical transition period.

Completing the seamless interface of theater logistics command and control requires the reengineering of the logistic structure at echelons above the army corps, numbered air force, numbered navy fleet, and the marine expeditionary force levels. This provides the geographic combatant commander with a single joint logistics operator in his theater of operations. Figure 4 illustrates the proposed joint logistics support command organization.

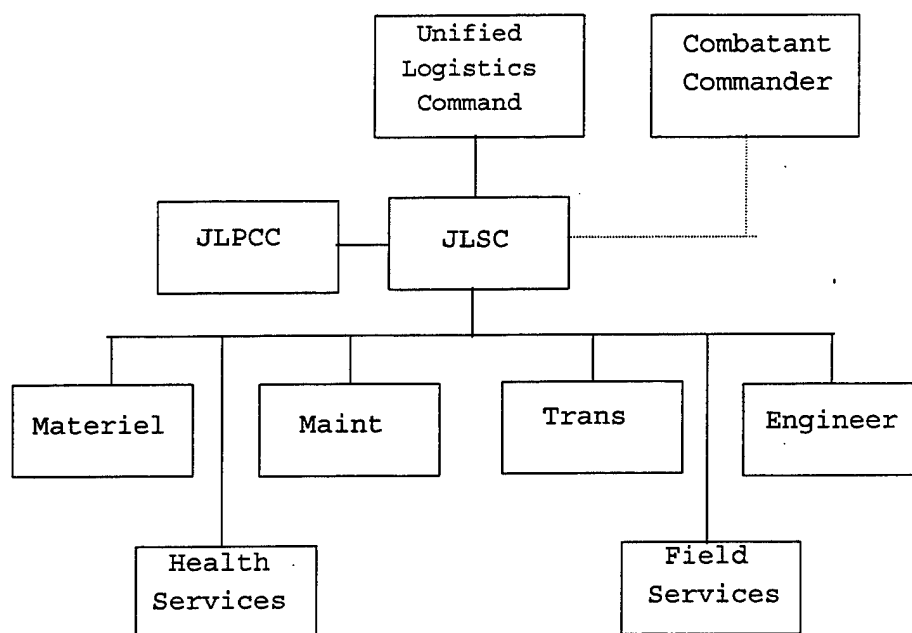


Figure 4 Joint Logistics Support Command

The U.S Army is pursuing the conversion of theater army area commands (TAACOM) to the Theater Support Command (TASCOM) concept.⁵¹ With modifications based on joint logistics doctrine, this organization can easily be converted to a joint logistics support command (JLSC). Doctrinally, a joint logistics support command serves as the single authority for logistics in the theater executing the guidance of the geographic combatant commander. Organizationally, the JLSC chain of command will be organized in peacetime as it would be in wartime. Once deployed to the theater, the JLSC is responsible for the six broad joint logistical support functions, unless otherwise directed by the geographic combatant commander, consisting of materiel, maintenance, transportation, general engineering, health services, and field services.⁵²

The JLSC is the logistical command and control headquarters for any assigned or attached units supporting service force units in the theater. Depending upon the size of the joint force deployed, the JLSC will deploy a predetermined headquarters structure. The early deploying JLSC headquarters must be active duty personnel with filler personnel coming from reserve component augmentation, as required. As a joint support command, there is the requirement for assignment of joint service personnel during peacetime as well as wartime. These individuals are required for planning, determining requirements, and executing joint missions on a day-to-day basis. A similar

organization was formed and tested successfully in Haiti during Operation Uphold Democracy.⁵³

The U.S. Army Materiel Command has developed a tailorable, multifunctional unit, called the logistics support element (LSE), that provides forward elements of the national logistics base to the theater.⁵⁴ The LSE has performed well in recent operations serving as the link between the nation's strategic assets and the theater. An element similar to this may be formed, as required, from the operating centers of the unified logistics command. Personnel deploying as the LSE would be assigned to the various functional areas of the JLSC. As with the JLSC headquarters, the size of the support element will be determined by its required missions.⁵⁵

BENEFITS

The creation of a unified logistics command and its subordinate theater joint logistics support commands provides a seamless logistics system linking the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The unified logistics command eliminates the redundancies and duplication of functions that exists among the Services today. Centralizing the purchase, stockage, and distribution of materiel under the unified logistics command allows greater efficiency and cost savings. Consolidation leverages the buying power of the entire Department of Defense,

- thereby, increasing competition. Centralized planning and decentralized execution provides the flexibility required by the geographic combatant commander.

Standardization of materiel management policies may reduce some quantities of materiel inventories that are currently held by individual services. A properly designed and fielded single national supply system provides better inventory visibility resulting in greater savings through increased redistribution.⁵⁶ More consolidation of service operated inventory control points is possible through the use of improved information systems employing real time data links and better inventory visibility. Simultaneous access to operational data and logistics statuses improves responsiveness and results in greater cost efficient operations.⁵⁷

The Joint Maintenance Center provides for more cost effective depot maintenance. By reviewing the capabilities that exists among the services against projected workload requirements, the Joint Maintenance Center can determine: 1) should there be closures; 2) how can cross-leveling of workload be best accomplished; or 3) should a particular service be designated as the executive agent for a major commodity of equipment.⁵⁸ Also, possibilities exist for greater cost savings by increased commercialization and privatization.

Logistical support to the geographic combatant commanders is streamlined by eliminating the various stovepipe systems in place today. The JLPCC provides the geographic combatant

commander a single logistical point of contact on his staff in the planning, development, and coordination of campaign plans. The JLPCC combined with the early deployers of the JLSC provides the peacetime-to-wartime transition logistics command and control required during this critical period. The JLSC affords the geographic combatant commander a single logistics command and control headquarters eliminating the individual services' stovepipes and often wasteful duplication. The JLSC with its assigned/attached elements serves as the connecting link between the strategic and tactical levels providing the geographic combatant commander and his joint forces responsive logistical sustainment. The JLSC speaks for the joint force commander in one voice when dealing with the operating centers of the unified logistics command.

The unified logistics command and its subordinate JLPCC and JLSC offer greater credibility to the geographic combatant commander. The unified logistics command replaces multiple agencies that have traditionally operated stovepipe programs which limited the visibility of sustainment to the joint force commander. Joint assignment of personnel throughout the unified logistics command organization affords a better understanding of service unique procedures and requirements, thereby, increasing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of an integrated command.

CONCLUSION

The strategic environment facing the U.S. Armed Services is one of more uncertainty and complexity than during the Cold War. The National Military Strategy emphasizes power projection from the Continental U.S. as forces are withdrawn from overseas basing. Effective force projection requires joint action under the direction of the geographic combatant commander.

The combatant commander requires a true seamless logistics system consisting of organizations molded together at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels responsible for supporting the joint force package across the spectrum of operations. At the strategic level, a DOD unified logistics command supports the geographic combatant commanders both in peacetime and wartime. It integrates and manages national level resources required for the sustainment of theater campaigns. This command eliminates the unnecessary duplication of functions at the strategic level providing DOD with a more effective and efficient solution to logistics support.

In the theater of operations, joint forces supported by force projection logistics demand a smaller, more tailored logistics structure emphasizing greater unity of effort. The employment of a joint logistics support command (JLSC) provides this unity of effort. This robust theater joint logistical command provides the required seamless linkage between the

tactical support units and the integrated efforts of a unified logistics command at the national level. The JLSC gives the geographic combatant commander a single theater manager for sustainment of his joint forces.

Changes that are overdue in the DOD logistics infrastructure must now be completed. Joint logistics commands at the national and theater level are the answers to increased efficiencies, greater effectiveness, and enhanced sustaining power of our combat forces. Joint logistics commands provide the integrated support required for rapid transition between peacetime and wartime. Centralization of logistical functions is clearly the future of providing support to our nation's armed forces ensuring unity of command and unity of effort in the control and management our national logistical resources.

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31. Pagonis, Moving Mountains, 97 and 98.

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33. Ibid., F-3.

34. Joint Pub 4-0, II-6.

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